

Remarks

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection and rejections set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 3-8 and 11-22 are now pending in the application, with Claims 5, 7, 13 and 15 being independent. Claims 1, 2, 9 and 10 have been cancelled without prejudice. Claims 3-8 and 11-15 have been amended and Claims 16-22 have been added herein.

Applicants thank the Examiner for her indication that Claims 5, 7, 13 and 15 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. In keeping with this indication of allowable subject matter, Applicants have amended each of Claims 5, 7, 13 and 15 into independent form, with minor changes to improve their form, and, consequently, these claims are seen to be in condition for allowance. Claims 3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 12 and 14 have been amended to depend from allowable claims and corresponding Claims 16-22 have been added. These claims are also seen to be in condition for allowance.

The Office Action entered rejections of Claims 1-4, 6, 8-12 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. § 103. Independent Claims 1, 2, 9 and 10 have been cancelled, and the remaining claims are seen to be in condition for allowance for the reasons noted above. The foregoing actions have been taken without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and without conceding correctness of the rejection, but rather strictly to obtain an earlier allowance and to expedite issuance. In particular, it is Applicants' current intention to file a divisional application, to pursue the subject matter of the rejected claims.

Thus, Claims 3-8 and 11-22 are patentable over the citations of record.

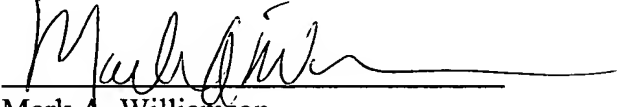
Reconsideration and withdrawal of the § 103 rejections are respectfully requested.

Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance.

Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the objection and rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,


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